

INVESTING IN PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. I am proud to cosponsor this bill, and I want to thank Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE and Chairman JERRY NADLER for, once again, their leadership and bold efforts to bring this bill to the floor.

This reauthorization bill builds upon the landmark 1994 legislation by expanding protections and services for survivors, while also working to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. It makes vital investments in preventing sexual assaults and stalking and increases victims' access to safe housing and economic stability. It also increases funding of programs for culturally specific services.

An estimated one in three women experience domestic violence in this country. I personally know what strong and consistent support means to emerge as a survivor.

When I was in the California State Legislature, I authored the Violence Against Women Act for the State of California. And today, I am so proud, along with Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, that we passed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act with bipartisan support. When I was in the California State Legislature, a Republican Governor signed my bill into law, so I thank the gentlewoman very much for her leadership.

COOPERATE WITH CENTRAL AMERICA'S NORTHERN TRIANGLE

(Mr. FORTENBERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, a hallmark of America is that we have opened our arms and have been a just and generous nation to people who are fleeing political violence elsewhere, who have been persecuted in their native lands, and who are coming here to seek a better way of life. But here is the problem, Mr. Speaker: chaos and disorder at our border undermine the ability of our country to extend that generosity.

A little-known fact about all of this is that for many years we have been working to get this question off of the one-yard line. But here we are again, seeing the trauma of unaccompanied children at our border and people receiving the wrong message that they can simply come here.

We spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to try to rebuild the conditions for the rule of law, to stop crime, and to give people economic opportunity. That is the right policy, and we had co-

operative agreements with those countries to begin to halt the messaging that it is proper or appropriate to come here illegally. Of course, this feeds human trafficking and children being left alone.

It is unjust. We need to return to the previous policy in which we are cooperating with those countries.

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate and commemorate this historic month, Women's History Month, and to celebrate the passing in the House of the equal rights amendment, as well as VAWA, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, H.R. 1620.

How grateful I am that this bill, H.R. 1620, addresses the need of sex trafficking victims while creating a demonstration program on trauma-informed training for law enforcement. It increases access to grant programs for culturally specific organizations and ensures culturally specific organizations are included in the development of programs.

It is supported by the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, a coalition of over 200 groups.

VAWA expired on September 30, 2018. We, as a body, are called upon by survivors to do our job. I am delighted to celebrate ANN KUSTER, GWEN MOORE, JACKIE SPEIER, BRENDA LAWRENCE, LOIS FRANKEL, DEBBIE DINGELL, and KAREN BASS, and the name of Sojourner Truth, the abolitionist suffragist, and Ivalita Jackson, my mother, a modern-day abolitionist and suffragist. They know that to get the job done, we must get the job done.

This bill is on to the other body, and now it is to be signed by the President of the United States. It is catapulted in Women's History Month. We celebrate ERA and the Violence Against Women Act.

PROTECTING ALL AMERICANS FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

(Ms. STEVENS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan bill to protect Americans from violence and abuse and to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse have access to the services they need.

I rise in support of a single mom hiding in a shelter with her two children. I rise in support of a mother looking to flee an abusive marriage with her children covered in disinfectant chemicals. These are the conversations I have had with women in my district, in Michigan 11.

The Violence Against Women Act reauthorizes funding for a variety of crit-

ical grant programs, including for victim services, prevention, training, education, enforcement, economic stability, and on.

Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, I walked with my colleagues over to the Senate majority leader's office to demand a vote on this reauthorization, and he refused to see us. He refused to even allow a vote.

Today, Mr. Speaker, as I rise, I look forward to working with a new Senate majority leader and a new President who will commit to protecting all Americans from violence in the household.

PROVIDING EQUAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

(Mr. CASTEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, during my first month in Congress, I visited Family Shelter Service, an organization that provides lifesaving counseling, victim protection, and a 24/7 hotline to women and children in northern Illinois. They provide nearly 11,000 nights of shelter for abused women and children every year.

To their staff, to their clients, and to the one in three women in the United States who experience domestic violence and the one in five women who are raped, the Violence Against Women Act has been a lifeline since 1994. But it needs to be updated and renewed, and that is what we have done today.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 makes crucial updates to this landmark bill to address its gaps, expand protections, and meet increased needs. We have expanded protections to make the law more inclusive of our LGBT communities. We have closed loopholes to better protect victims from gun violence, improved victim services to help survivors heal and access justice, and increased funding for programs to help children who are exposed to domestic violence in the home.

We have made vital new investments in prevention and victim services, including an amendment that I introduced to train healthcare providers on college campuses so they can better meet the needs of the one in four undergraduate women who are victims of sexual assault.

This is for our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, and our friends. But it is also for Americans, regardless of their gender, who aspire to live in a country that truly provides equal protection and equal opportunities for all.

We have done our work here today. It is now crucial that the Senate do theirs and send this bill to the President's desk.